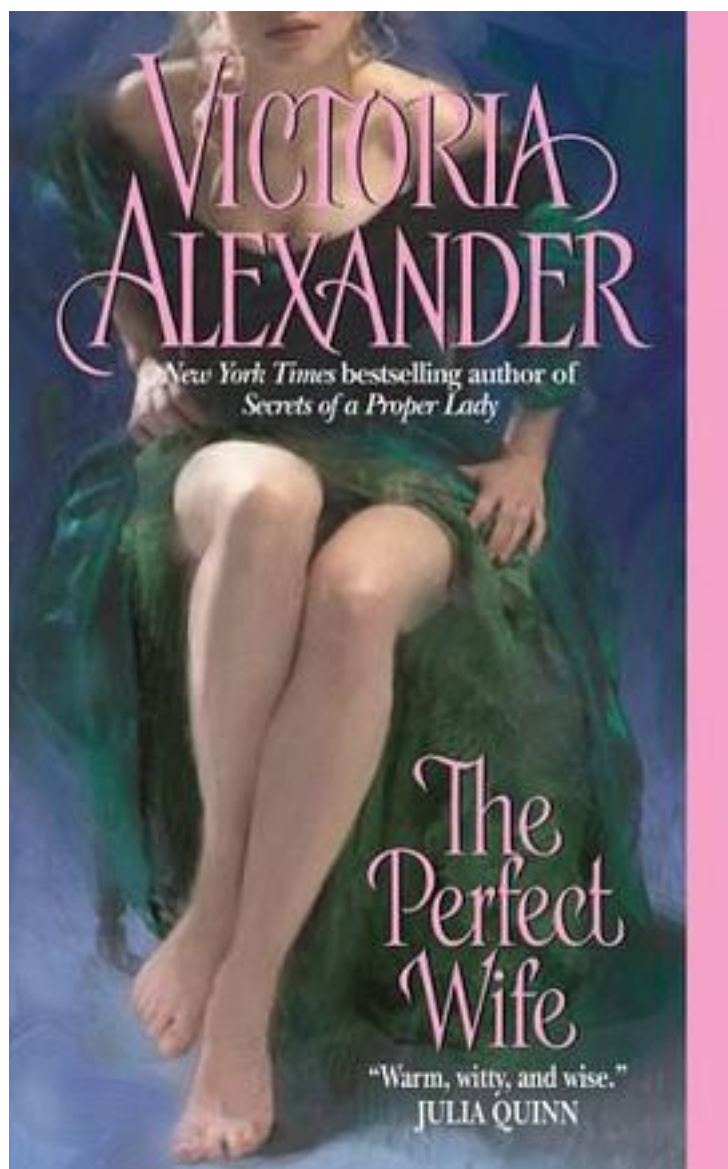


The Perfect Wife



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Laura Bush is arguably the most popular figure in the Bush White House. Even the President's detractors would not hesitate to describe the First Lady as utterly sincere and devoted to family and country, whether she is advocating on behalf of education and libraries or comforting the nation in times of crisis. Ann Gerhart of "The Washington Post" has covered Mrs. Bush since 2001, and no other reporter has interviewed the First Lady more often. Through this unparalleled access Gerhart has been able to uncover the woman behind the carefully maintained image. Far more than an uncomplicated maternal figure and dedicated wife, Laura Bush emerges as a complex and fascinating woman in her own right, who has composed a life of accomplishment for herself alongside her husband's tremendous ambitions. "The Perfect Wife" tells the complete story from Mrs. Bush's upbringing to her whirlwind three-month courtship by George W. Bush and her role as a mother, wife, and public figure. An only child raised in a segregated and fiercely traditional West Texas town, she is less conservative than her husband and appealingly down-to-earth despite the extraordinary privileges of her position. Two tragedies have defined her: a car accident when she was seventeen and September 11, when she suddenly had to transform her job and take herself far more seriously. Ann Gerhart examines the First Lady's influences and motivations, reveals the depths to which her husband relies upon her, and assesses her achievements. Compelling and insightful, this is the first comprehensive account of a woman who has won the admiration of the nation and of the compromises and challenges that come with taking on the most examined volunteer job in the world.

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